

*Physical Disabilities
Through the Lifespan*



Reproductive Health

July 22, 2003



State of the Field and Current Concerns

- There is a general lack of sexual education, sexual health care, and opportunities for expression of sexuality for disabled people, especially women.
- There has been no inclusion of women with disabilities in studies on contraceptive methods.
- There is very little data on pregnancy, labor, and delivery in disabled women.



State of the Field and Current Concerns

- Most existing U.S. studies on pregnancy have focused on women with acquired (rather than congenital) disabilities and have studied very small samples.
- There is little research on parents with disabilities and their children; existing studies tend to be biased.
- Research on families with disabled parents has focused on baby care tasks and excluded issues pertaining to parenting school-aged children.



Research Priorities

- Studies on physiological and social aspects of sexuality and reproductive health in disabled people throughout the lifespan
- Retrospective analysis of contraceptive use in women with disabilities (including effectiveness, side effects, disability-specific interactions, STI's, social and economic factors, etc.) and design of prospective studies



Research Priorities

- Creation of a database including information about conception, pregnancy, labor, and delivery in large numbers of women with disabilities
- Needs assessment of adaptive childcare equipment
- Study the impact of disability on family formation in the areas of marriage, childbearing, single parenting, custody and adoption proceedings